



michigan league of conservation voters

Testimony on: SB 948, SCR 16, SCR 17, SR 150, and SR 151

Committee: Senate Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes

Submitted By: Jack Schmitt, Deputy Director, Michigan League of Conservation Voters

Date: June 5th, 2014

My name is Jack Schmitt and I am the Deputy Director for the Michigan League of Conservation Voters. I am submitting written testimony today in support of SB 948, SCR 16 and SCR 17 introduced by Senator Pavlov and SR 150, and SR 151 introduced

Michigan LCV is the non-partisan political voice for protecting Michigan's air, land and water. We have close to 90,000 members across the state, many of whom reside near Lake Huron in St. Clair County and across Michigan's thumb. Chemical contamination is an important issue for our membership, and on behalf of Michigan LCV's members, I appreciate your efforts to address the proposed Kincardine, Ontario nuclear waste respiratory and protect the Great Lakes from radioactive waste.

Senator Pavlov is correct to be seriously concerned about the proposal to store nuclear waste on the shores of Lake Huron. Water is the main vehicle for dissemination of radiotoxic pollutants. If there were to be a leakage it would be extremely dangerous for citizens of the Great Lakes Basin and expose fish and other aquatic wildlife in Lake Huron to dangerous levels of nuclear waste. A recent report from the University Research Corridor, a partnership of Wayne State University, Michigan State University and the University of Michigan, shows that one in five jobs in Michigan are directly tied to the quality and quantity of Michigan's freshwater. Placing a nuclear waste facility on the shores of a Great Lake would certainly put the health of our Great Lakes ecosystems at risk, and it would also threaten Michigan's water-based economy. A spill would have the potential to devastate our state's billion-dollar fishing and tourism industries, as well as shipping. Michigan cannot afford to have a nuclear disposal facility in our backyard.

Senator Pavlov's bill would do a number of important things to address this the threat of a nuclear waste facility near the shores of Lake Huron..

First, Michigan already has prohibitions on radioactive waste facilities within its borders. This bill would expand the ban on permanent storage to include Class C radioactive waste. Class C is the most dangerous kind of nuclear waste and has no place within Michigan's state lines.

Second, the bill would establish a Great Lakes Protection Radioactive Waste Advisory Council to assess and call attention to the health, natural resources and other impacts the Kincardine facility could have. I commend the Senator for including diverse stakeholders in this council including environmental organizations, an individual representing a Native American tribe, conservation organizations, cultural organizations, industry, and the radiology experts. My expectation is that this Advisory Council can reach consensus to make clear and swift recommendations to protect our Great Lakes from radioactive pollutants. Specifically, Michigan LCV would ask that the facility identify alternate sites to store nuclear waste that are not adjacent to a major source of drinking water and facet of Michigan's natural resources economy.

Finally, I commend Senator Pavlov and Senator Green's resolutions, which call on our nation's leaders including Congress, the President and the Secretary of State to urge the International Joint Commission to study the potential impacts of the facility on the Great Lakes and the people who depend on them.

The IJC has the authority to take on regionally important issues and as such should be asked to take a formal position and evaluate the safety of the nuclear waste repository.

This package of bills has clear support from Michiganders across our state who depend on the Great Lakes for their livelihoods. Thank you again for taking a stand to protect Michigan's clean water for citizens today and future generations to come.
